

the condition of education 2007



INDICATOR 6

Language Minority School-Age Children

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Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2007*, visit the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007064>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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Elementary/Secondary Education

Language Minority School-Age Children

The number of children ages 5–17 who spoke a language other than English at home more than doubled between 1979 and 2005.

Between 1979 and 2005, the number of school-age children (ages 5–17) who spoke a language other than English at home increased from 3.8 million to 10.6 million, or from 9 to 20 percent of the population in this age range (see supplemental table 6-1). An increase is also evident during the more recent period of 2000 to 2005 (18 to 20 percent). Among school-age children who spoke a language other than English at home, the total number of children who spoke English with difficulty increased from 1.3 million (or 3 percent of all 5- to 17-year-olds) to 2.9 million (or 6 percent) between 1979 and 2000, and did not measurably change from 2000 to 2005. However, these children have continued to decrease over time as a proportion of those who spoke another language at home, from 34 percent in 1979 to 31 percent in 2000 to 27 percent in 2005.

In 2005, the majority of school-age children who spoke a language other than English at home spoke Spanish (see supplemental table 6-2). The next largest number of children speaking a language other than English at home spoke other Indo-European¹ languages, followed by Asian/Pacific Islander² languages and then

other languages. Those who spoke Spanish or an Asian/Pacific Islander language at home were more likely to speak English with difficulty (28 percent for both) than were those who spoke other Indo-European languages (21 percent) or other languages at home (19 percent).

The percentages of school-age children who spoke a non-English language at home varied by race/ethnicity, citizenship, and poverty status in 2005. Among school-age children, relatively more Hispanic children spoke a language other than English at home (69 percent), followed by Asians (64 percent), then Pacific Islanders (31 percent), American Indians/Alaska Natives (17 percent), persons of more than one race (9 percent), Whites (6 percent), and Blacks (5 percent). The percentage of non-U.S. citizens who spoke a language other than English at home (90 percent) was higher than the percentages of naturalized U.S. citizens (64 percent) and U.S.-born citizens (16 percent) who did so. Higher percentages of poor (30 percent) and near-poor (29 percent) 5- to 17-year-olds spoke a non-English language at home than did nonpoor 5- to 17-year-olds (14 percent).

¹ An Indo-European language other than Spanish (e.g., French, German, Portuguese, etc.).

² Any native language spoken by Asians or Pacific Islanders, which linguists classify variously as Sino-Tibetan, Austroasiatic, or Austronesian languages.

NOTE: Respondents were asked if each child in the household spoke a language other than English at home. If they answered "yes," they were asked how well each child could speak English. Categories used for reporting were "very well," "well," "not well," and "not at all." All those who reported speaking English less than "very well" were considered to have difficulty speaking English. In 1994, the survey methodology for the Current Population Survey (CPS) was changed and weights were adjusted. Spanish-language versions of both the CPS and the American Community Survey (ACS) were available to respondents. *Poor* is defined to include families below the poverty threshold, *near-poor* is defined to include families at 100–199 percent of the poverty threshold, and *nonpoor* is defined to include families at 200 percent or more than the poverty threshold. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), 1979 and 1989 November Supplement and 1992, 1995, and 1999 October Supplement, and American Community Survey (ACS), 2000–05.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Supplemental Notes 1, 2, 3
Supplemental Tables 6-1, 6-2
NCES 2004-009

Federal Interagency Forum
on Child and Family Statistics
2005

LANGUAGE MINORITY: Percentage of 5- to 17-year-olds who spoke a language other than English at home and who spoke English with difficulty: Selected years, 1979–2005



Language Minority School-Age Children

Table 6-1. Number and percentage of children ages 5–17 who spoke a language other than English at home and who spoke English with difficulty: Selected years, 1979–2005

Year	Total population (in millions)	Spoke a language other than English at home				
		Number (in millions)	Percent of total population	Spoke English with difficulty ¹		
				Number (in millions)	Percent of total population	Percent of those who spoke a language other than English at home
1979	44.7	3.8	8.5	1.3	2.8	34.2
1989	42.3	5.2	12.3	1.8	4.3	34.6
1992	47.7	6.3	13.2	2.2	4.6	34.9
1995	47.5	6.7	14.1	2.4	5.2	35.8
1999	52.7	8.8	16.7	2.6	5.0	29.5
2000	52.5	9.5	18.1	2.9	5.5	30.5
2001	53.0	9.8	18.5	2.8	5.4	28.6
2002	53.0	9.8	18.5	2.8	5.3	28.6
2003	53.0	9.9	18.7	2.9	5.5	29.4
2004	52.9	9.9	18.8	2.8	5.3	27.9
2005	52.8	10.6	20.0	2.8	5.4	26.8
Percentage change compared with 1979						
2005	18.2	177.9	135.1	118.0	91.6!	-21.6

! Interpret data with caution.

¹ Respondents were asked if each child in the household spoke a language other than English at home. If they answered "yes," they were asked how well each child could speak English. Categories used for reporting were "very well," "well," "not well," and "not at all." All those who reported speaking English less than "very well" were considered to have difficulty speaking English.

NOTE: Spanish-language versions of both the Current Population Survey (CPS) and the American Community Survey (ACS) were available to respondents. In 1994, the survey methodology for the CPS was changed and weights were adjusted. Due to differences between the CPS and the ACS, use caution when comparing data before 2000 (CPS) with data from 2000 (ACS). See *supplemental notes 2 and 3* for more information.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), 1979 and 1989 November Supplement and 1992, 1995, and 1999 October Supplement, and American Community Survey (ACS), 2000–05.

Language Minority School-Age Children

Table 6-2. Number and percentage of children ages 5–17 who spoke a language other than English at home and who spoke English with difficulty, by selected characteristics: 2005

Characteristic	[Numbers in thousands]								
	Spoke a language other than English at home								
	Total population	Number	Percent of population ²	Spoke English with difficulty ¹					
				Total		Ages 5–9		Ages 10–17	
				Number	Percent of population ²	Number	Percent of population ²	Number	Percent of population ²
Total	52,835	10,560	20.0	2,834	5.4	1,389	7.1	1,445	4.3
Language spoken at home									
English	42,275	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
Spanish	7,568	7,568	100.0	2,125	28.1	1,066	36.8	1,059	22.7
Other Indo-European ³	1,455	1,455	100.0	309	21.2	136	26.2	172	18.4
Asian/Pacific Islander ⁴	1,160	1,160	100.0	329	28.3	155	36.6	174	23.6
Other	376	376	100.0	71	18.9	32	21.5	39	17.2
Race/ethnicity ⁵									
White	31,231	1,751	5.6	400	1.3	140	1.2	260	1.3
Black	7,717	414	5.4	99	1.3	35	1.3	65	1.3
Hispanic	9,877	6,822	69.1	1,930	19.5	1,020	25.7	911	15.4
Mexican	6,682	4,792	71.7	1,474	22.1	803	29.3	670	17.0
Puerto Rican	913	465	50.9	93	10.2	38	10.6	55	9.9
Cuban	210	149	70.9	28	13.4	14	17.4	14	11.0
Dominican	260	228	87.8	59	22.7	29	29.8	30	18.4
Central American	594	506	85.2	138	23.3	67	29.9	71	19.2
South American	382	302	79.1	61	15.9	29	20.2	31	13.3
Other Hispanic	837	379	45.4	78	9.3	39	12.2	39	7.6
Asian	2,006	1,291	64.4	350	17.4	169	21.7	181	14.8
Pacific Islander	67	21	31.2	4	6.3	3!	9.0	2!	4.4!
American Indian/Alaska Native	445	74	16.6	11	2.6	5	2.8	7	2.4
More than one race	1,289	112	8.7	20	1.6	11	1.9	10	1.3
Citizenship									
U.S.-born	50,025	8,182	16.4	1,843	3.7	1,032	5.5	811	2.6
Naturalized U.S. citizen	555	356	64.2	80	14.4	24	17.5	56	13.4
Non-U.S. citizen	2,255	2,021	89.6	911	40.4	332	51.0	579	36.1
Poverty status ⁶									
Poor	9,147	2,788	30.5	943	10.3	476	13.2	467	8.4
Near-poor	10,958	3,175	29.0	913	8.3	483	11.4	430	6.4
Nonpoor	31,916	4,457	14.0	931	2.9	405	3.6	526	2.5
Region									
Northeast	9,301	1,826	19.6	430	4.6	191	5.7	239	4.0
Midwest	11,704	1,267	10.8	351	3.0	161	3.7	190	2.6
South	19,040	3,221	16.9	895	4.7	443	6.2	453	3.8
West	12,789	4,245	33.2	1,158	9.1	594	12.4	564	7.0

† Not applicable.

! Interpret data with caution.

¹ Respondents were asked if each child in the household spoke a language other than English at home. If they answered “yes,” they were asked how well each child could speak English. Categories used for reporting were “very well,” “well,” “not well,” and “not at all.” All those who reported speaking English less than “very well” were considered to have difficulty speaking English.

² Percentage of the total population for that particular subgroup. For example, 16.6 percent of all American Indians/Alaska Natives spoke a language other than English at home, and 2.6 percent of all American Indians/Alaska Natives spoke a language other than English at home and spoke English with difficulty.

³ An Indo-European language other than Spanish (e.g., French, German, Portuguese, etc.).

⁴ Any native language spoken by Asians or Pacific Islanders, which linguists classify variously as Sino-Tibetan, Austroasiatic, or Austronesian languages.

⁵ Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

⁶ *Poor* is defined to include families below the poverty threshold, *near-poor* is defined to include families at 100–199 percent of the poverty threshold, and *nonpoor* is defined to include families at 200 percent or more than the poverty threshold.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. A Spanish-language version of the American Community Survey (ACS) was available to respondents. For information about the states in each region, see *supplemental note 1*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2005.

Language Minority School-Age Children

Table S6-1. Standard errors for the number and percentage of children ages 5–17 who spoke a language other than English at home and who spoke English with difficulty: Selected years, 1979–2005

Year	Total population (in millions)	Spoke a language other than English at home				
		Number (in millions)	Percent of total population	Spoke English with difficulty		
				Number (in millions)	Percent of total population	Percent of those who spoke a language other than English at home
1979	†	0.06	0.53	0.04	0.53	1.21
1989	†	0.09	0.58	0.05	0.61	1.18
1992	†	0.10	0.55	0.06	0.57	1.08
1995	†	0.10	0.52	0.06	0.55	1.02
1999	†	0.12	0.53	0.07	0.57	0.87
2000	†	0.12	0.21	0.07	0.13	0.60
2001	†	0.08	0.14	0.04	0.08	0.37
2002	†	0.08	0.14	0.04	0.08	0.37
2003	†	0.08	0.14	0.04	0.08	0.37
2004	†	0.08	0.14	0.04	0.08	0.37
2005	†	0.12	0.06	0.03	0.06	0.25
Percentage change compared with 1979						
2005	†	5.57	14.63	7.16	36.61	2.86

† Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), 1979 and 1989 November Supplement and 1992, 1995, and 1999 October Supplement, and American Community Survey (ACS), 2000–05.

Language Minority School-Age Children

Table S6-2. Standard errors for the number and percentage of children ages 5–17 who spoke a language other than English at home and who spoke English with difficulty, by selected characteristics: 2005

Characteristic	[Numbers in thousands]								
	Total population	Spoke a language other than English at home							
		Number	Percent of population	Spoke English with difficulty					
				Total		Ages 5–9		Ages 10–17	
				Number	Percent of population	Number	Percent of population	Number	Percent of population
Total	118.2	57.4	0.10	30.1	0.06	21.1	0.06	21.6	0.05
Language spoken at home									
English	108.0	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
Spanish	48.8	48.8	†	26.1	0.29	18.5	0.32	18.5	0.27
Other Indo-European	21.6	21.6	†	10.0	0.61	6.6	0.66	7.5	0.58
Asian/Pacific Islander	19.3	19.3	†	10.3	0.75	7.1	0.80	7.5	0.71
Other	11.0	11.0	†	4.8	1.15	3.2	1.20	3.6	1.11
Race/ethnicity									
White	94.9	23.7	0.07	11.4	0.04	6.7	0.04	9.2	0.04
Black	49.3	11.6	0.15	5.7	0.07	3.4	0.07	4.6	0.07
Hispanic	55.5	46.4	0.26	24.9	0.23	18.1	0.25	17.1	0.21
Mexican	45.9	39.0	0.31	21.8	0.29	16.1	0.32	14.7	0.26
Puerto Rican	17.2	12.3	0.94	5.5	0.57	3.5	0.58	4.2	0.56
Cuban	8.2	6.9	1.78	3.0	1.34	2.1	1.49	2.2	1.23
Dominican	9.2	8.6	1.15	4.4	1.48	3.1	1.61	3.1	1.37
Central American	13.8	12.8	0.83	6.7	0.99	4.7	1.07	4.8	0.92
South American	11.1	9.9	1.18	4.4	1.06	3.1	1.17	3.2	0.99
Other Hispanic	16.4	11.1	0.98	5.0	0.57	3.6	0.64	3.6	0.52
Asian	25.4	20.4	0.61	10.6	0.48	7.4	0.52	7.7	0.45
Pacific Islander	4.7	2.6	3.21	1.2	1.69	0.9	1.99	0.8	1.42
American Indian/Alaska Native	12.0	4.9	1.00	1.9	0.43	1.2	0.44	1.5	0.42
More than one race	20.4	6.0	0.45	2.6	0.20	1.9	0.22	1.8	0.18
Citizenship									
U.S.-born	141.4	62.0	0.11	29.7	0.06	22.3	0.07	19.8	0.05
Naturalized U.S. citizen	16.4	13.1	1.41	6.2	1.04	3.4	1.12	5.2	1.00
Non-U.S. citizen	32.9	31.1	0.45	20.9	0.72	12.7	0.73	16.7	0.70
Poverty status									
Poor	53.5	29.9	0.27	17.4	0.18	12.4	0.20	12.3	0.17
Near poor	58.4	31.9	0.25	17.2	0.15	12.5	0.17	11.8	0.13
Nonpoor	95.8	37.7	0.11	17.3	0.05	11.4	0.06	13.0	0.05
Region									
Northeast	49.8	23.9	0.23	11.7	0.12	7.8	0.14	8.8	0.12
Midwest	55.6	20.0	0.16	10.6	0.09	7.2	0.10	7.8	0.08
South	71.0	31.8	0.15	16.9	0.09	11.9	0.10	12.1	0.08
West	57.8	35.9	0.24	19.2	0.14	13.8	0.17	13.4	0.13

† Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2005.